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THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2015

Dog Trapped on canal

Facebook played a part in a successful
rescue of Siberian husky Star Saturday.
Page 3

Prepared for the worst

Terminally ill mom Tanya Lafleur wants
her tale to impact young families.
Page 8

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Ship-shape sendup



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UPFRONT

■ **SHIPPING:** Port Colborne Mariners Celebration

Prayers and fun usher in start of canal season

GREG FURMINGER
QMI Agency Niagara

Regis Philbin's got nothing on Rev. Robert Hurkmans, who's a comedic hit with his game show *Who Wants to be a Mariner?*

The game show styled after the popular *Millionaire* trivia game was one of the features during the hour-long Port Colborne Mariners celebration Sunday night, an annual affair that combines prayer for sailors and local marine industry with the start of the Welland Canal shipping season.

With John Maloney in the hot seat, Hurkmans quizzed the mayor on marine history, a clever way of sharing background for the crowd that packed into St. James & St. Brendan Anglican Church.

For example, it was Franz von Papen who once plotted to blow up the canal, during the First World War.

A video question elicited laughs and groans when the smokestack of the Windoc was shown crashing into a prematurely lowered Allanburg Bridge in 2001.

The mayor guessed correctly to: What do you do with a drunken sailor? Don't return him to the Belmont.

Yes, Maloney did use a couple of lifelines, including to phone a friend, the curator of the local museum, and he polled the audience for the million-dollar question: What was the name of the dog rescued on the Welland Canal Saturday?

It was a fun affair that also featured a dance number by the Port Colborne High School group FLOW, a bagpiper and a choir directed by Robert Wood.

But there was also time for reflection on the risks that men and women take on the open waters.

For these people and their loved ones at home, prayers were offered.

"We thank you for all of the mariners, the sailors, for their skills upon the water that brings them in safety across the oceans of the world," Hurkmans said with



PHOTOS BY GREG FURMINGER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Rev. Robert Hurkmans of St. James and St. Brendan Anglican church is set to emcee *Who Wants to be a Mariner*, based on the *Millionaire* game show, during Port Colborne's Mariners Celebration that champions the local marine industry and start of the Welland Canal shipping season. Pictured on Sunday in Port Colborne.

head bowed.

The church at the corner of Charlotte and King Sts. was dressed to the nines for the event. Nautical flags were suspended above the choir and marine industry flags, including those of local shipping-related

industries and businesses, lined the walls.

Both port and starboard lights shined at the front of the pews.

The canal, with the St. Lawrence Seaway, officially opens Thursday.

Two Niagara top hat cer-

emonies are scheduled that day, at which head topers are presented to the captains of the canal's first downbound and upbound ships.

Port Colborne's downbound ceremony starts 8:30 a.m. at Lock 8 Park. The



Hon. Paul J. Martin and Whitefish Bay await the start of the Welland Canal Shipping season, on Sunday.



Who Wants to be a Mariner, based on the *Millionaire* game show, was featured during Port Colborne's Mariners Celebration that champions the local marine industry and start of the Welland Canal shipping season.

upbound celebration takes place at the St. Catharines Museum Lock 3 complex starting at 10 a.m.

The April 2 opening of the canal is the first time since 1997 that ships aren't plying the waterway in March. The originally scheduled March 27 opening was pushed back because of the large buildup of ice on the seaway and Great Lakes this winter. Said Maloney at Sunday's celebration: "We encourage all of you at the seaway to be careful."

greg.furminger@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @GregATheInb



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LOCAL NEWS

■ **WELLAND CANAL:** Tribune Facebook post leads to owner's identity within minutes

Dog rescued on ice south of Lock 8

GREG FURMINGER
QMI Agency Niagara

The tale of a two-year-old Siberian husky trapped on the Welland Canal in Port Colborne came to a happy ending.

Within minutes of the story and photos about the troubled canine being posted the *The Tribune's* Facebook page Saturday morning, Star's owner was tracked down by friends.

Crystal Derragh's beloved companion wandered off from her Erie St. home, about a kilometre away, when she had slipped away to the store at about 8:30 p.m. Friday.

Welland and District Humane Society called for the assistance of Port Colborne Fire and Emergency Services just before 8:30 a.m. Saturday after Star was spotted in the snowy ice of the canal just south of Lock 8.

Despite rescue attempts by Port Colborne firefighters, it was hoped that Star would make her own way to higher ground.

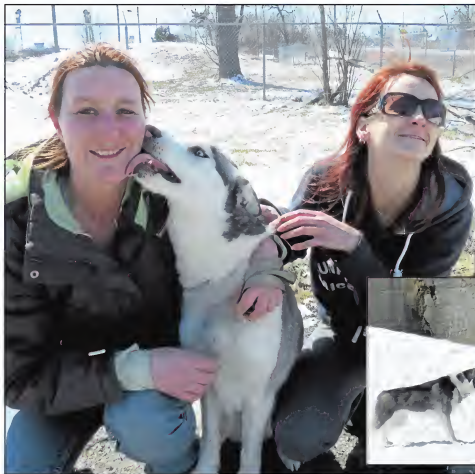
The dog barked occasionally as it ran up and down the ice nearby the Great Lakes ship *Baie Comoreau*, which has been tied up in the canal over winter.

Firefighters put ladders down both east and west canal walls, and one tethered firefighter in a water rescue suit ventured onto the icy surface in hopes of luring the dog with treats.

"He was afraid of us," Port Colborne Fire Chief Tom Cartwright said of the canine.

The presence of firefighters along the canal banks, plus humane society officials and others, seemed to make the dog nervous, and the dogs would often run to other spots along the canal walls in search of an escape route. Cartwright said firefighters didn't want to panic the dog into heading toward open water near the Clarence St. bridge.

So they grabbed construction materials from the fire hall just opposite from where the dog was trapped and fashioned a ramp. It was secured



PHOTOS BY GREG FURMINGER/
QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Left: Port Colborne resident Crystal Derragh gets a sloppy kiss from her two-year-old Siberian husky Star, who was trapped in the Welland Canal, south of Lock 8. Also pictured is Sharon McSweeney, who told her friend where her lost dog was minutes after story about the stranded pooch was posted on the Welland Tribune's Facebook page.

Below: Port Colborne firefighter Mike Radzikowski tries to gain the trust of Star, trapped in the Welland Canal, south of Lock 8 Saturday in Port Colborne.



and dropped into the canal at a spot firefighters typically do their water rescue training.

Firefighters cleared the scene just past 9:30 a.m. having left the dog with the tools it needed to make it to freedom.

"He's relatively safe," Cartwright said.

"We put lots of food down there, and hopefully she'll be able to find her own way out."

Well, as it turned out, when the story about the dog was posted to *The Tribune's* Facebook page, it took just min-

utes to catch the attention of Derragh's friend, Sharon McSweeney.

"I saw it on Facebook and called (Derragh) right away," she said following a successful rescue.

As Derragh was choking back tears when approached by *The Tribune*, firefighters returned and led her toward the ramp they had left for Star.

Cartwright said it was "an unusual set of circumstances" that led firefighters to outfit Derragh with a life vest, safety

harness, ropes and helmet to assist in getting Star reunited with her owner. She climbed the canal wall on a fixed ladder to a dock.

"We don't like to do these types of things, but we took all the safety measures involved," the chief said.

Firefighters, he said, could have spent hours trying to coax the dog to safety, but knew it could be done in short order with the owner.

"As soon as she went down, the dog came right to her."

The dog was leashed then led up the ramp by firefighter Mike Radzikowski.

Derragh said her dog was "exhausted" but otherwise in great shape after her ordeal.

"She's fine, she's happy she's with me now," she said before the dog gave her sloppy kisses.

She was impressed by the swift impact Facebook played in Saturday's reunion just before 12:30 p.m.

"Social media — just go, go, go," she said.

greg.furminger@sumedia.ca
Twitter: @GregAThTrbv



Open for business, or out to lunch?

DAVE AUGUSTYN
 For Pelham News

Last Wednesday, Niagara regional Chair Alan Caslin presented his first state-of-the-region address at a chamber of commerce luncheon in Niagara Falls.

"For far too long, we've had a sign in the window saying, 'out for lunch, back in an hour,'" said Caslin. "We must do better. Niagara must be 'open for business.' Under my leadership and the leadership of my council colleagues — Niagara is open for business."

Last Thursday, I tested his statement at regional council; unfortunately council came up short.

First, Tim Chutterbuck, president of the Industrial Power Users of Niagara (IPUN), asked council to support their provincial lobbying efforts to reduce the cost of electricity for Niagara's largest industries. They find it exceedingly difficult to compete with the two-cent per kilowatt-hour automatic reduction for northern Ontario industries and with the cheap industrial power rates in western New York.

Since the region supported IPUN's similar proposal last year (as part of 2014 Niagara Week), I thought it would be a no-brainer to support its initiative now.

Instead, the majority of council voted to refer the matter to staff for a report sometime in May.

Later, council considered setting the 2015

tax rates and ratios.

When approving the 2015 budget in February, council accepted the premise that this year's tax increase would be \$27.50 (or 1.92%) for the average residential property valued at \$226,134.

But now, because of new assessment growth in commercial and industrial tax classes, staff calculated the final residential increase at \$22.42 (or 1.62%).

Councillors discussed this \$5.08 "benefit" two weeks ago and asked for options. Could we deliver half the benefit to residential property class owners — for a \$24.66 or 1.77% increase — and use the other half to help commercial or industrial businesses?

When I saw that one of these options would reduce the industrial tax burden by

1.34%, I proposed it to regional council. Since this type of reduction was exactly what the chamber of commerce suggested a few years ago and given the chair's "open for business" catchphrase the day before, I expected council to jump at this opportunity.

Instead, only Councillors Brian Felt, Andy Petrowski and I supported the idea. Perhaps the majority of council wanted to keep the "out-to-lunch" sign on the door and voted to study the option for 2016.

Some have used the "open for business" slogan at the region before. Maybe it's time to concentrate less on slogans and more on delivering results.

You may contact Mayor Dave at dave@pelham.ca or read past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com.



Yanagi Maru is pictured at the Iroquois Lock in 1970.

RENE BEAUCHAMP

Shipwrecks — Yanagi Maru

SKIP GILLHAM
 For QMI Agency Niagara

Yanagi Maru was built at Imabari, Japan, and completed in April 1968.

The 123.4-metre-long carrier was diesel powered and able to handle 7,200 tonnes of cargo.

The Japanese flag freighter entered the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1970 but was much more at home on the Pacific Ocean and other saltwater routes.

It was sold and registered in Greece as *Panagia* in 1976 and in Malta as *Makaris* in 1990. Neither ship made it to the Great Lakes.

Makaris was on a voyage from Ashdod, Israel, to a Romanian port when fire broke out in the engine room while sailing the Mediterranean Sea between Cyprus and Crete on Aug. 1, 1991. The blaze was soon out of control and the crew abandoned the ship for their own safety.

The burned-out hull did not sink and was later taken in tow arriving at Piraeus, Greece, on Aug. 5. After being idle for several months, the ship was sold to Turkish shipbreakers. It was towed into Aliaga on Feb. 15, 1992, under the abbreviated name of *Ariz*, and was broken up by Cukarova Celik.

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■ ACCOLADES

Citizens and businesses of the year honoured

QMI Agency Niagara

Some of the best people and businesses along the Lake Erie shoreline now have fancy awards that recognize their contributions to the community.

Some of the best people and businesses along the Lake Erie shoreline now have fancy awards that recognize their contributions to the community.

The annual President's Awards were handed out last week by Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce.

merce.

The awards honour hard-working citizens and the best in business from Port Colborne and Wainfleet.

The citizen of the year is

Gail Todd.

The junior youth citizen of the year honour went to Brooke Bultz, while Austin Stastny was named youth citizen of the year.

The award for women in business award was presented to Tracy MacLeod of Business Express.

Bremfield's Heavenly Chocolates was named best

new business of the year. And Lake Erie Property Maintenance was presented with the President's Award for business of the year.

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■ CHAIR ALAN CASLIN DELIVERS HIS FIRST STATE OF THE REGION ADDRESS

‘Open for business’

RAY SPITERI
QMI Agency Niagara

Niagara is open for business.

That's one of the key messages Niagara Regional Chair Alan Caslin delivered to fellow politicians and business leaders during his first state-of-the-region address last Wednesday afternoon at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls.

"Many of you own or run a business — if you were looking for a location for a new office that faced roadblocks in planning, zoning and permit decisions at every turn, you would no doubt take your business elsewhere," said Caslin.

"In the past, Niagara Region has been its own worst enemy by not supporting the flow of available investment into Niagara region."

"For far too long, we've had a sign in the window saying, 'Out for lunch, back

in an hour.' We must do better, Niagara must be 'open for business.' Under my leadership and the leadership of my council colleagues — Niagara is open for business."

In an interview with reporters after his address, Caslin said while regional government doesn't create jobs, it can set the environment to attract businesses and help them expand in Niagara.

"I want to make sure that you get a yes before a no when you come to our door to want to do business in Niagara," he said. "We need business to create jobs, we need prosperity and we need it now."

Caslin said communities such as Barrie and Kitchener-Waterloo have seen a "more healthy expansion" than Niagara in recent years.

"We need to lay out infrastructure of transit. We need to make sure that we



MIKE DIAMANTISTA/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Niagara Region Chair Alan Caslin gave his first State of the Region address on Wednesday afternoon at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls.

have our government approvals and planning and development in place quickly. We need to be responsive to their financial needs... respectful of taxes, hold our development charges at bay.

"There's lots of things that we can do as a council."

He said it's "vitally important" that Niagara, as a council, work together to move the region forward.

"Think of the rowing scenario: If everyone is rowing in the same direction, you definitely get a lot more traction, a lot more distance and that's what we're trying to do right now. We're trying to make sure that we're respectful of everybody's position, but make sure that we all do what's right for our community instead of what's right for an individual

interest."

During his address, Caslin said his priorities are to "move our people, move our performance and move our region forward."

He highlighted Niagara's ongoing push to convince the provincial government to approve daily, year-round GO train service through Niagara.

"We need it all the way to Niagara Falls. And we need a commitment this year," said Caslin.

In October, he said Premier Kathleen Wynne directed a Niagara delegation to come back to her with a detailed business plan for GO in the first quarter of 2015.

"I'm proud to say that we've completed the work, as requested, and that the Region is willing to put forward a sig-

nificant investment in order to make this a reality.

"I am certain that having GO Transit to Niagara Falls will spur increased economic growth in the region."

Caslin, from St. Catharines, was elected chair by his peers over incumbent Gary Burroughs of Niagara-on-the-Lake prior to the first meeting of this term of regional council in December.

Wednesday's address was followed by a business roundtable with representatives from Niagara's chambers of commerce, local industry associations and Caslin. The roundtable allowed business leaders to discuss their specific issues and concerns.

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■ MUSIC

Welland singer's single cracks Billboard Top 40

JOHN LAW
QMI Agency Niagara

Two months after launching her debut single, 17-year-old Welland singer Ashlynn Vince has cracked the Billboard Top 40 charts.

Held on to Love, the polished pop song she recorded in Nashville last year, debuted last week at No. 37 on Billboard's Indicator Chart, placing her alongside Taylor Swift, Maroon 5 and Ed Sheeran.

"This is a big deal for a first single from a new artist," says manager Tony Mantor, who signed Vince to his Nashville-based label Plateau Music when she was 16. Originally a country singer, Vince switched gears for *Held on to Love*, an infectious dance song straight out of the Cher/Believe mold.

But as she answers her cellphone last Friday, Vince doesn't sound like a pop star on the rise. She's keeping her excitement in check.

"I don't know how to describe it," she says, on her way home from Centennial Secondary School. "I'm excited, but I feel I can't be 100% excited about it because I don't have

gigs yet."

That happens after the second single, she's been told. To prove she's serious.

She's already on it. In April she'll return to Nashville to record a follow-up single.

"It feels like I'm getting there," she says, looking back on a career that began at 12 singing at Fonthill's Urban Steakhouse. "I love every minute of it."

Starting at 16, Vince made several trips to Nashville, where she was spotted by a recording engineer. That led to the deal with Plateau Music, whose stable includes Sam Austin, Bobby Wilson and Christine Padua.

While recording for weeks, she kept up at school with online courses.

Now that her foot's in the door, she's doubling down on her music career.

"I'm waiting," she says. "Good things are happening but I'm just waiting for the next thing to happen. So while I'm waiting, I'm still in school."

And while she's in school, she's still the same old Ashlynn to her friends. "They treat me the same," she says. "It would be weird if they treated me differently."

Vince and her band Souled-Out plays The Urban Steakhouse (at Rice Rd. and Hwy. 20) April 2 at 9 p.m.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ **FAMILY:** Benefit for terminally ill cancer patient Tanya Lafleur and her Welland family is this Saturday

Prepared for the worst

GREG NIAGARA
QMI Agency Niagara

As 35-year-old Welland mom Tanya Lafleur courageously talks about the end of her life, she speaks calmly about the terminal cancer that has spread throughout her body.

The only time she chokes back tears is when she thinks of the future that will be left behind for her husband of seven years, Kevin, and their 17-month-old daughter, Magen, whose name was chosen when the couple honeymooned in Magen's Bay all those years earlier.

"I got a raw deal," Tanya says of her fate.

But she hopes her story can inspire other young families to be prepared for the worst.

Because her parents

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An online fundraising account has been established at Go Fund Me. Visit: www.gofundme.com/krv3k

instilled in her long ago to have life insurance, and a will, she finds some comfort in knowing the man with whom she has a "rock solid marriage" and their little blessing will be taken care of when she's gone.

"If I didn't have life insurance before this, I wouldn't be able to get it," she says while advising others to get their ducks in a row.

"Just because you're young — anything can happen."

It was immediately following a hike with a large back-

pack last July that Tanya felt a pain in her side. She figured she had torn a muscle in her rib cage.

As we already know, it turns out it was much worse.

A large mass was discovered by ultrasound. Following visits to the Juratski Cancer Centre in Hamilton, it was determined the mass encompassed her diaphragm, it was attached to her liver, and her chest.

Cancer has since attacked her lymph nodes and other parts of her body, including her vertebrae.

"Unfortunately, it's a spreading case of one of the rarest forms of cancer you can have," Tanya says.

So rare, doctors have not assigned it a name. Her medical reports call it "most unusual," and experts across North America continue to try to identify it.

"The cancer is going to kill me, it's just how and when."

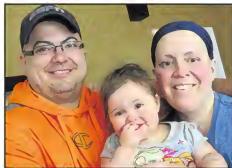
Chemotherapy is not effective, so, to provide some form

of pain relief, Tanya will be relying on palliative radiation treatment. It is hoped to give her more freedom from the hospital bed in the living room of the family's Thorold Rd. E. home.

"I want to get up and move with her," she says of Magen, a little miracle who came after years of trying to start a family.

Tanya, who had been a law clerk and office manager at Elkin Injury Law in St. Catharines, had been the family's prime breadwinner, the "career mom." That was part of the Lafleur family plan. Kevin, 38, who works as a chef at Heatherwood Retirement Residence, also in St. Catharines, would play the role of a more hands-on dad in parenting.

Things were good. The house they bought before marriage has been restored, they planned to travel. But now they're struggling to pay the bills and the costs related to regular driving and care at



GREG NIAGARA/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

A benefit fundraiser will be held this coming Saturday for Welland's Lafleur family — Kevin, 17-month-old Magen and Tanya, who has terminal cancer. Pictured on Sunday March 29, 2015 in Welland, Ont.

Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto.

That's where friends come in.

A fundraiser for the Lafleurs will be held this coming Saturday at Auberge Richelieu on River Rd. in Welland. Tickets are \$5 available at the door. It starts 7 p.m.

"We're doing this benefit to ease their financial burden," says event organizer Lynn Miner. "They're very good friends of ours."

So far, the community has donated more than \$25,000 in prizes.

What some people may consider to be little things have been of great help to the couple. Someone to baby-sit during a hospital appointment. Someone to do a load of laundry. Someone who has donated a gas card.

"It's just heartwarming."

says Kevin.

"It restores your faith in the human spirit," he says of all that has been done to date and will continue this weekend.

That, too, does bring tears to Tanya's eyes. She grew up in a household that rallied behind charitable causes and fundraisers.

"It's always been about giving back to the community," she says.

"And I know Kevin's going to follow that through with Magen."

Now on the receiving end, she considers herself "lucky" to have a giving network of friends and family to keep her spirits up.

She looks forward to seeing them Saturday.

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IN BRIEF

Four arrests made after theft of collectibles

Four people have been arrested following a series of break-ins at a Port Colborne storage facility.

Earlier this year, members of the Niagara Regional Police Welland street crime unit began investigating a series of commercial break and enters. Over a few weeks, more than \$50,000 in collectible items were stolen, including trading cards, coins, stamps, antique figurines and toys.

There was a break in the case when two suspects attempted to pawn stolen items at a Niagara Falls pawn shop.

The store owner also happened to be the owner

of the storage facility in Port Colborne where the items had been stored.

With the help of video surveillance, two suspects were identified.

As a result, police were led to a Port Colborne residence, where more than \$7,000 in stolen property was recovered.

Gordon Thurston, 54, and Steven Harris, 38, both of Port Colborne, are charged with fraud under \$5,000, two counts of possession of property obtained by crime under \$5,000 and one count of possession of property obtained by crime over \$5,000.

Paige Ayres, 31, and Ryan Aliyan, 22, both of Port Colborne, are charged with one count of possession of property obtained by crime under \$5,000.

All four parties were released from custody with a future court date.

The matter is still under investigation and additional charges and arrests are anticipated.

Anyone with information is asked to call 905-735-7811 ext. 3316 or to contact Crime Stoppers.

Man arrested, drugs seized in Port Colborne

Quick action by police led to one arrest and the seizure of drugs in Port Colborne last Wednesday.

Members of the Niagara Regional Police Welland street crime unit were at a Port Colborne residence for a stolen property investigation.

Detectives discovered a male hiding in the home. He was unrelated to the investigation.

The male attempted to destroy a package of suspected crystal methamphetamine in the presence of police, but was

stopped by the officers.

As a result, the drugs, valued at \$400, and more than \$700 in cash were seized.

Lawrence Maude, 42, of Port Colborne, is charged with possession of a Schedule I Substance for the purpose of trafficking, obstruction of justice and possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime under \$5,000. Maude was also charged with breaching his probation and with one count of fail to comply with an undertaking.

Soup+event aids Port Cares

Port Cares is ready to again tantalize the taste buds of local residents.

The organization is hosting its sixth annual SoupFest fundraiser on Thursday, April 9, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Italian Canadian Cultural Centre, 223 Bell St. in Port Colborne.

A variety of soups will be prepared and served up by culinary students from Lakeshore Catholic High School, Port Colborne High School, Port Colborne College, as well as members of the Niagara Regional Police, local fire crews and the Port Cares Reach Out Food

Centre.

Students from the local high school music departments will provide live entertainment during the meal.

Guests, who will be sent home with soup recipes, will have the chance to vote for their favourite soup of the day.

Tickets cost \$15 and include soups, dessert, coffee and tea. They're available at Port Cares or at the door.

Proceeds from the fundraiser support the Port Cares meal program at the food centre, which served more than 18,700 meals to people in need in 2014.



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LOCAL NEWS



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■ COURT

Plea in Kelvin Sawa's jail death

TONY RICCIUTO
 QMI Agency Niagara

A Niagara man has pleaded guilty to a charge of manslaughter in connection with the death of a Port Colborne inmate at Niagara Detention Centre in 2011.

Cale Arthur Rose, 31, entered the plea last Friday in Superior Court of Justice in Welland in front of Justice James Ramsay.

Rose and another accused, Jeremy William Hall of Hamilton, were both originally charged with second-degree murder in the death of Kelvin Sawa.

Sawa, 46, suffered fatal injuries while behind bars at the Thorold jail on Aug. 15, 2011.

The Port Colborne taxi driver died in hospital a few days later. He was in jail on charges of sexual assault and sexual interference involving a 14-year-old male.

All the facts in this case cannot be reported at this time because of a publication ban.

Court heard Rose had been in the Thorold jail for about six months prior to this incident. He explained there are certain rules that inmates follow while in custody and if they are not followed there are consequences to be paid.

Sawa had arrived at the jail just a few days before this incident. When word spread that he was in custody for a sex offence some of the inmates began to give him a hard time. On one occasion he was beaten up while taking a shower.

Rose said he was given a rope by someone else at the jail and was told to take it over to Sawa's cell.

"A few guys told him to do it," Rose

said in a recorded interview to police that was played in the courtroom on Friday.

Sawa ended up hanging himself with the rope that he had been given. Before the hanging, Sawa had told a cellmate that he would rather hang himself instead of being murdered.

Crown attorney Tyler Shuster said Rose co-operated with the police investigation and that he had served 27 months of deadline before his trial. He recommended a sentence of 30 months, which would only leave a few more months to serve.

Defence lawyer Michael DeGobbo asked for time served, in light of the guilty plea and that any further time in jail would put his client in danger.

"The judge said Sawa should not have suffered such a cruel death, and we will never know if he was guilty of the charges he was facing while in jail."

"He must have been pushed beyond endurance," said Ramsay.

The judge sentenced Rose to 30 months in custody, minus his pretrial custody, and ordered him to serve an additional 45 days in jail.

Before leaving the courtroom, Rose did apologize to Sawa's sister who did provide a victim impact statement.

"I'm sorry and I hope you can forgive me one day," he said, while trying to hold back his emotions.

Rose is expected to give evidence when Hall's case comes to court next month. Hall has pleaded not guilty. Jury selection in Hall's trial will begin April 7 and evidence will start to be presented April 20.

tony.ricciuto@surmedia.ca

LOCAL NEWS

CRIME

Luring charges laid against former city council candidate

GREG FURMINGER
QMI Agency Niagara

An educational assistant with Niagara's public school board and a candidate in the recent Port Colborne municipal election has been arrested on allegations of Internet luring and making sexually explicit material available to a person he believed was under the age of 16.

Todd Albert Klacko was arrested last Wednesday in the "welland area" by Niagara Regional Police.

The 46-year-old Royal Rd. resident was suspended last Thursday from his job as an educational assistant for District School Board of Niagara, board spokeswoman Kim Yiedling said.

Klacko had been employed full time and started his employment with the board in 1991, she said.

At what schools he has worked will not be disclosed.

However, Yiedling said police have confirmed that Klacko has "not had any dealings" with DSDN students in regards to the charges now before the court.



TODD KLACKO

NRP spokesman Const. Phil Gavin said that was an "accurate" statement.

Court records also that between Aug. 27, 2014, and March 24 Klacko believed he was telecommunicating with a 16-year-old he believed to be under the age of 16. Gender was not identified.

Court records show that person was actually an NRP detective to whom Klacko also is accused of making sexually explicit material available.

Klacko is charged with two counts of luring a child who he believed to be under the age of 16 years, and one count of making available sexually explicit material to a person who is or he believed to be under the age of 16 years.

The arrest stems from proactive investigation regarding child luring offences on the Internet, police said in a news release, that was led by members of the Internet child exploitation unit and assisted by with the assistance of the NRP's technological crimes unit and The Repeat Offender Parole Enforcement Squad.

Subsequent to Wednesday's arrest, a search warrant was executed at a Port Colborne residence.

Anyone with information about the child luring offences is urged to contact the NRP at 905-735-7811.

At the same time the offences are alleged to have occurred, Klacko was running as a Ward 3 candidate for Port Colborne city council.

Among volunteer work he cited while campaigning was 17 years for Port Colborne Minor Baseball as a coach and executive member. He previously ran the Todd's Ice Cream business.

Klacko was released on \$2,500 bail last Thursday as a result of a bail hearing in St. Catharines.

His conditions of release include that he not be in the company of nor communicate with

anyone under the age of 16 unless accompanied by either of two designated individuals. He also must stay away from parks, pools, schools or any other place where someone under the age of 16 can be expected to be present unless also accompanied by the designated individuals.

Conditions prevent him from continuing on with his paid employment and he must not possess any computer or device that has access to the Internet or other digital network.

A court-ordered publication ban on what was said at the bail

hearing and a ban to prevent the identification of any victims are both in effect.

A call placed to the accused's residence for comment was rejected.

Klacko has not yet had an opportunity to plead to the charges and none of the allegations against him have been proved in court.

Klacko is next scheduled to be in court in Welland at 9 a.m. Wednesday, April 22.

greg.furminger@summedia.ca
Twitter: @GregATheFib

CRIME

Cold weather key in recovery of stolen watercraft

GREG FURMINGER
QMI Agency Niagara

It wasn't Jet Ski weather — and it wasn't the personal watercraft of a driver who was recently spotted towing it.

A curious Hamilton police officer, as a result, learned the watercraft had been reported stolen from the Wainfleet area in 2013.

On Friday, March 6, at about 10:15 p.m. during routine patrol, the officer spotted a white pickup towing the watercraft east on Binbrook Rd. in Binbrook.

"Seeing this watercraft stood out to the officer given the current winter climate conditions," Hamilton Police media relations officer Const. Steve Webster wrote in an e-mail to The Tribune.

The officer followed the vehicle with the intention of conducting a traffic stop when a Volkswagen Jetta appeared

to intentionally move behind the truck's trailer to obstruct the view of the officer. The officer accelerated and moved between the vehicle and the truck and initiated a traffic stop. The Jetta stopped behind the officer as the truck pulled over, but the car's driver eventually fled from the area to avoid police.

In conversation with the driver of the truck it was learned that he was wanted by police for an unrelated criminal matter, Welton said. The man was arrested.

Investigation revealed that both the trailer and the watercraft had been stolen in August 2013. Jason MacDonald, 41, of London, Ont., was charged with possession of stolen property over \$5,000.

A police investigation is ongoing.

greg.furminger@summedia.ca
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FESTIVAL 2015**

■ **EDUCATION:** Confederation secondary, Champlain elementary schools to amalgamate

New French public school to be built

MARYANNE FIRTH
QMI Agency Niagara

Welland.
Conseil scolaire Viamonde announced last Friday that Confederation secondary school and Champlain elementary school will merge together in a new facility to be built in

the coming years.

The Ministry of Education has awarded the French public school nearly \$11 million to construct a new school to house both the Jaguars and the Sharks.

The facility, for students in junior kindergarten to Grade 12, will be built on the existing Confederation grounds on Tanguay Ave. in Welland.

Construction will take place beside the existing school, which will remain open while the build takes place. The aging building will be demolished when the project is complete.

"For our students and the community, this is an opportunity to have a new school that will meet the needs of the area," said board trustee Derrick Fournier, a Confederation graduate.

The high school, built in 1966 and elementary school built in 1954 are two of the oldest facilities owned by the board. Champlain, on Afton Ave., was purchased by the board in 1981.

Now that the funding announcement has been made, the next step is to begin planning and creating the detailed design for the facility, said Claire Fournier, the board's director of communications.

A date has not yet been set for construction to begin, as it will vary depending on the coming planning process, she added.

It is expected to take 14 to 16 months to build the school, with an opening anticipated in the next two to three years.

The new school will house 350 students, but will be built to easily accommodate expansions if needed. Confederation and Champlain have a current combined enrolment of about 250 students.

"It will be state of the art," Francoeur said of the new building, which will be constructed with environmental efficiencies in mind.

This is the second school in the board that will have combined high school and elementary school students. Welland's new facility will be loosely modelled after the existing school in Pickering, but designed specifically to meet local needs, Francoeur said.

"It has been successful and very well received by the community," Fournier said of Ecole Ronald-Marion, which is in its second year of operation.

While the two groups of students will be under one roof, elementary and high school grades will be housed in different wings of the building, Fournier said.

"They'll be separated, but will benefit from the use of each other's facilities."

There will be opportunities moving forward, he said, for students, staff and the public to provide input on the project.

"For the francophone community, it's something that's very needed and deserved," Confederation principal Benoit Dussault said of the new facility.

"We've been waiting for this news for a few months and we're thrilled," he said, while adding the school will "bring new energy to the community."

Students from both schools came together in the Confederation auditorium for the announcement Friday and were later treated to special performance by French-Canadian pop group Raffy.

maryanne.firth@summedia.ca
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■ EDUCATION

Niagara Catholic announces Award of Distinction recipients

QMI Agency Niagara

Former Lincoln County principal and Welland County school trustee, Joseph Noonan will be posthumously awarded Niagara Catholic District School Board's 2015 Education Award of Distinction this year.

Also receiving the award is Anna Racine, chairwoman of Niagara Catholic's special education advisory committee and a parent volunteer.

Noonan began his career in Catholic education in the 1950s, and spent the next 44 years committed to expanding Catholic education in Niagara. He went door-to-door in Welland to convince Catholic ratepayers to direct their taxes to Catholic schools which were in need of financial support.

As a teacher, the board said in a news release issued Tuesday, he demanded high standards of his students. As a trustee, he was a frequent visitor in schools,

speaking with students and staff so that he could better understand the issues he needed to bring to the board table.

He died in November 2007 at age 81. Racine joined the Catholic school council at St. Thomas More Elementary School in Niagara Falls when her son, now in university, was in senior kindergarten. Today she serves Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Michael High School as their liaison with the special education advisory committee, the parish and the community.

"Individuals like Ms. Racine and Mr. Noonan enrich our school communities in so many ways, whether it is as an educator, a trustee or as a parent advocate," said school board chairman Father Paul MacNeil.

Awards will be presented at the 12th annual Bishop's Gala, which will take place at Club Roma in St. Catharines April 10.



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LOCAL NEWS

COMMUNITY

Leaders needed for Habitat project

MARYANNE FIRTH
QMI Agency Niagara

Before the latest Habitat for Humanity project can set sail in Port Colborne, some one needs to be found to steer the ship.

The local organization, which usually builds homes with interest-free mortgages for low-income families, has received its first house donation and will begin extensive

renovations this fall.

But before work can start on the Bell St. home donated by brothers John and Stephen Miklosik, a steering committee must be established for the project. Habitat chief executive officer Alastair Davis told Port Colborne council Monday night.

Members of the committee will take on a leadership role and work on all aspects

of the project, including assisting with fundraising and in-kind donations, volunteer co-ordination, communications and promotion of events, and identifying a family in need that the home would be suitable for.

"We want to take this house and turn it into a great home," Davis said, while adding the committee is needed to "mobilize the community" and get all

the pieces in place that will ensure the renovations are a success.

He estimated it will cost about \$65,000 to upgrade the home for modern family living.

The first fundraising event for the project, a roast beef dinner at Bethel United Church, is set to take place April 29. There will be two sittings, at 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., and takeout will be available.

Cost is \$15 for adults and \$6 for children.

For reservations or more information, call Gord at 905-735-6764, Judy at 905-704-9095 or e-mail dinneratbetheluc@gmail.com.

Applications from families hoping to call the Port Colborne home their own will be received through April. For more information on applying for the home, call 905-685-7395 ext. 403.

Davis encouraged council, as well as the community at large, to get involved with the project, whether as a member of the committee, an on-site volunteer or a donor.

Anyone interested in joining the steering committee is asked to call Davis at 905-685-7395 ext. 207.

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■ MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS: Organization provides progress update to city council

Port YMCA ends year with surplus

MARYANNE FIRTH
QMI Agency Niagara

Revenues may be lower than projected, but expectations remain high for YMCA operations at Vale Health and Wellness Centre.

Representatives updated Port Colborne council last week on the status of the Y's past fiscal year of operations, while also outlining plans for the future.

As part of its 2012 agreement with the city, the YMCA developed a five-year financial plan based on projections by independent market research.

"We're pleased to report the YMCA has met or exceeded all targets for Year 2," centre manager Ben McDermott said of the time frame that includes September 2013 to August 2014.

During that time, Port's YMCA had an average of 2,530 active members per month, higher than the anticipated average of 2,15 for its second year.

Of those members, 60% joined as families and 19% received financial assistance.

The Y's revenues for the year were about \$31,000 less than projected, but its expenses were also less than anticipated, McDermott said.

Children and youth represent 50% of the membership, higher than the predicted 45%, which is why revenues are slightly down from projected numbers, he said.

Higher than planned expenses were incurred related to cleaning and maintaining the pool, but money was saved over the projected cost of salaries due

to summer staff efficiencies, he said. The YMCA, which employs 73 people, also incurred additional capital costs to install an entrance heater to assist with temperature control.

The organization ended the year with a \$5,070 surplus — about \$30,000 shy of where it had expected to be.

Port Colborne provides the YMCA a \$300,000 operating service fund annually to help subsidize the cost of programming. That fund will be reduced by the \$5,070 surplus for 2015, McDermott said.

During its third year of operation, from September 2014 to August 2015, the YMCA is projected to maintain a 2,402 membership average. It is projected to end the year with a \$16,800 surplus.

Expenses are expected to decrease by 6% in the third year of operations, as fewer staff will be needed to assist with orientation as the community becomes more familiar with the facility, McDermott said.

The YMCA, he said, will continue working to review its programs and extend its outreach in the community. Partnerships are already being formed, he added, with local school boards and their swim to survive program, the Ontario Early Years Centre, Special Olympics aquatics program, Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet and Port Cares.

maryanne.firth@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @mfirfthbureau

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CITY OF PORT COLBORNE PUBLIC NOTICE
CLOSING OF PART OF ORIGINAL ROAD ALLOWANCE
BETWEEN LOTS 16 AND 17 CONCESSION 5
AND
CLOSING OF PART OF ORIGINAL ROAD ALLOWANCE
BETWEEN LOTS 24 AND 25 CONCESSION 4

Take Notice that the Council of the City of Port Colborne will hold a public meeting to consider a by-law to permanently close part of the original road allowance between Lots 16 and 17, Concession 5 and to permanently close part of the original road allowance between Lots 24 and 25, Concession 4. These road closes are for pieces of road allowance that were thought to have been stopped up and closed during the construction of the Welland Canal bypass.

Details of the Public Meeting:

Date: April 27, 2015
 Time: 6:30 p.m.
 Location: Council Chambers, 66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne

1. The portion of the unimproved and untraveled portion of the original road allowance between Lots 16 and 17, Concession 5, in the former geographic Township of Humberstone, now in The City of Port Colborne and municipally known as the unimproved and untraveled portion of Kleinsmith Road immediately south of the Townline Tunnel lands and designated as Part 10 on the Reference Plan 59R-15312 dated March 18, 2015. The parcel is a landlocked parcel north of the road allowance closed by by-law 3412/143/196 and registered as Instrument Number R0719834 during the construction of the Welland Canal bypass.
2. The portion of the unimproved and untraveled portion of the original road allowance between Lots 24 and 25, Concession 4, north of the road allowance between concessions 3 and 4 and south of the Welland Canal, in the former geographic Township of Humberstone, now in The City of Port Colborne, designated as Parts 1, 7 and 8 on the Reference Plan 59R-15310 dated March 18, 2015.

The Reference Plans illustrating the two road allowances are available for inspection (together with this notice) on the municipality's website www.portcolborne.ca and in the Clerk's Office.

Written and/or oral comments will be considered at the public meeting and can be forwarded to the undersigned. Written comments should be submitted by no later than Friday, April 17. Council will hear any person or their counsel, solicitor or agent who claims his/her land will be prejudicially affected by the proposed by-law and who applies to be heard at the meeting.

Additional information related to the road closing can be obtained by contacting the City Clerk at 905-835-2901 ext. 106.

Dated at Port Colborne this 19th day of March 2015.

Ashley Grigg, Clerk
 City of Port Colborne
 66 Charlotte Street
 Port Colborne, ON L3K 3C8

www.InPortNews.ca

■ MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Port council debates purchase of diesel trucks

MARYANNE FIRTH
 QMI Agency Niagara

It was the purchase of seven new vehicles that fuelled discussions at Port Colborne council last week.

A staff report recommending the replacement of seven aging work trucks at a cost of more than \$242,000 had council members debating whether diesel or gasoline vehicles were the way to go.

The vehicles come from five different departments — engineering, roads, water, sewer and parks — and range in model years from 1992 to 2003.

The trucks were recommended to be paid for through water, sewer and public works equipment reserves, which at the end of 2014 totalled more than \$400,000. The city did not purchase any vehicles in 2014.

Sixteen suppliers, who were able to bid on the vehicles on the purchase list, acquired tender documents for the city's bidding process, which requested the cost for gasoline options as well as diesel where possible.

Vehicles with a diesel option were deemed more cost effective by staff after extensive research, Ron Hanson, Port Colborne's director of engineering and operations, said.

Maintenance costs tend to be less over time, with fewer repairs, and diesel-powered vehicles also use about 25% less fuel than their gasoline-powered counterparts, he said.

Just choosing the diesel option, however, will cost the city an additional \$5,000 to \$10,000 more per vehicle during the purchase, he added.

After factoring in maintenance, fuel consumption, the extra up-front cost, staff estimate diesel will save the city \$15,000 to \$20,000 each over time.

The expectation, Hanson said, is that

the diesel vehicles will last long past a 10-year expected life span.

The staff report outlining the benefits of diesel over gasoline was written by Chris Lee, the city's manager of projects and design, who was away Monday and unable to attend the meeting.

Ward 3 Coun. Ben Kenny asked that the issue be deferred to allow for more information to be brought forward upon Lee's return.

"I'm still not convinced," she said, adding she wanted to be certain before deciding to spend that much money to update the city's fleet.

Based on the bids received, staff recommended purchasing three vehicles from Performance Chrysler in St. Catharines and the remaining four from Niagara Motors in Virgil.

The trucks being replaced by the city are auctioned and the money put back into the equipment reserve funds.

Ward 3 Coun. Frank Danch, who has owned several trucks over the years, said "diesels plain cost more."

He had concerns about the cost of general maintenance, including a simple oil change, which he said will cost the city significantly more.

"They're expensive right off the bat."

Ward 4 Coun. Ron Bodner had concerns councilors had "all of us suddenly become experts in the truck department."

Staff were hired to research the options and did so extensively, he said, praising Lee for his efforts.

The item was deferred to allow for further information regarding the gasoline versus diesel comparison to be brought to the April 13 meeting of council.

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